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ABSTRACT

This book describes the context of school retention and evaluates its effects by tracking the experiences of a large representative sample of Baltimore (Maryland) school children from first grade through middle school. The first chapter is a discussion of major issues of retention such as: (1) why the topic is often pushed aside in schools; (2) what research has been conducted in the area; (3) costs of retention; (4) fairness; and (5) weaknesses in prior studies. Subsequent chapters discuss: (1) the educational experiences of retained students throughout the 8-year study period, including those with other forms of tracking; (2) characteristics of repeaters, including academic and adjustment problems of repeaters prior to being held back; (3) the effects of retention on standardized test scores; (4) teachers' evaluation of repeaters; and (5) retention's effect on children's attitudes toward school, self, and achievement orientation. The book also discusses retention as part of elementary and middle school tracking, and as something which has many positive consequences and which does not necessarily impede academic performance. The book ends with a discussion of why, despite these factors, retention is so stigmatized. (Contains 184 references.) (JW)

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